

an image of ambivalent womanhood, with its sensitively rendered female figure. Actually, seen from the back, she could be a boy; her left shoulder bulges a bit, and her adjacent trapezius muscle (to the left of her spine) is also beefy. But glimpsed from the front—in her mirrored reflection—she is slim and unmistakably girlish. In other words, there are two girls in the painting. There's the real girl, perhaps a tomboy, who has sneaked upstairs to the attic with her *Movie Spotlight* fanzine (do her parents even allow her to read it?), propped a mirror against a chair, and put on her mother's lipstick. Then there's the other girl, the reflected mirror image that she confronts across a dark divide.

Who is that girl in the mirror? Covering her breasts with both arms as she raises her hands to her chin, she appears vulnerable

and even fragile. Her toy doll, dressed in layers of ruffles and tossed on the floor, is a bizarrely sexualized object. A series of oil sketches indicate that Rockwell originally situated the doll behind the mirror, sitting up primly, and it was only in the final painting that he moved the doll to her position of smashed innocence. She is shown bent over, legs splayed, her rump lifted into the air and pressed against the hard edge of the mirror. With her right hand buried in her petticoats, the doll could almost be masturbating. She adds to the sense that *Girl at Mirror* is a painting about a girl who seems both excited and shamed by the call of adolescent sexuality.